monsoon season, rectification of the faults in underground cables takes some time.

(e) MTNL has taken the following steps in this direction:

I. Mahanagar Telephone Nigam Limited (MTNL) has been able to approve from the Hon'ble Governor to form a Committee which includes Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD), New Delhi Municipal Committee (NDMC), Delhi Vidyut Board (DVB), Mahanagar Telephone Nigam Limited (MTNL) and other private telephone operators who will work together to protect the underground cables from damage.

II. There is a proposal to replace all the paper Type cables with Optical Fibre Cable/Jelly Filled Cable (OFC/JF) in near future.

III. More and more Switching nodes like Remote Switching Unit (RSU), digital Line Concentrator (DLC) etc. are being installed so that the length of the underground cables can be minimized and reduce the number of telephone complaints.

IV. There is a proposal to replace all E-10B exchanges with new technology.

V. New technique like Wireless in the Local Loop (WLL) is introduced so that the length of the external wire, which connects to the customer, can be reduce.

Expansion of local call facility upto 500 kms.

†985. SHRI ANIL SHARMA: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Delhi-Chandigarh, which falls within 200 Kilometers, has been deprived of local call facility;

(b) whether there is any proposal under Government's consideration to expand the local call facility upto 500 Kilometers by inter-connecting one circle with other; and

(c) if so, by when?

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†Original notice of the Question was received in Hindi.

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI TAPAN SIKDAR): (a) As per policy local dialing without "0" (On code "95") is provided up to 200 Kms. for intra circle calls and calls between Delhi SDCA and SDCAs located in NCR. Delhi and Chandigarh form part of different Telecom Circles and Chandigarh not being part of NCR, local dialing without "0" therefore has not been provided between them.

(b) No, Sir.

(c) Not applicable in view of (b) above.

Investment in Sankhya Vahini Project

986. SHRI RAJU PARMAR:
SHRI BHAGATRAM MANHAR:

Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that a provision of Rs. 94.25 crore has been earmarked for the year 2000-2001 as initial investment in the Sankhya Vahini Project conceived by IT Task Force;

(b) if so, what are the details thereof;

(c) whether Government have entered into a joint venture project with IU-Net, a fully owned subsidiary of Carnegie Mellon University, Pittsberg, USA without undertaking any study/project report; and

(d) if so, what are the reasons for choosing the above subsidiary/ company for the project?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI TAPAN SIKDAR): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. A provision of Rs. 94.26 crore was made in Budget Estimates for the year 2000-2001 to meet the expenditure from Department of Telecommunications (DoT) side in this project, as is the normal practice for all DoT project. This amount was sought on a provisional basis only, to be adjusted at the time of Revised Estimates 2000-2001.

(c) and (d) As on date, on Joint Venture Agreement with IU-Net has been entered into.